



# Be one in a MILLION HEARTS™

Preventing 1 million heart attacks and strokes over 5 years



## The Problem

Americans suffer almost 2 million heart attacks and strokes each year. Heart disease and stroke (sometimes called a brain attack) are the first and fourth leading causes of death in the United States. They cause about 30% of all deaths. But there's good news! The major risk factors for heart disease and stroke—high blood pressure, cholesterol, smoking, and obesity—*can* be prevented and controlled.

## Our Goals

**Help Americans make healthy choices**, such as quitting smoking and lowering the amount of sodium (salt) and trans fat we eat. Healthy choices from the start mean that fewer people will need to take medicines to control their blood pressure or cholesterol. When it comes to heart health, it is never too late to lower risk! We control our choices.

## Community Health Workers and Million Hearts™

Million Hearts™ is a national program to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes in the United States by 2017. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) are the lead federal agencies for this initiative.

Community health workers (CHWs)/promotores de salud, community health representatives, and others can work together with CDC and CMS to help reach the program's goal. For those at risk for high blood pressure and high cholesterol, CHWs can play an important role in prevention.

### To support people in their health care needs, CHWs can—

**TEACH** community members that they need to get screened for high blood pressure and cholesterol. Most of the time, people at risk do not feel sick and are not aware they have these conditions.

**TEACH** community members to ask for and know their blood pressure and cholesterol numbers and to know what healthy levels should be.

**ENCOURAGE** community members to ask their doctor what their goals should be for blood pressure and cholesterol.

**TEACH** community members how important it is for them to control their blood pressure and cholesterol.

**TEACH** community members that uncontrolled high blood pressure and cholesterol can damage their eyes, kidneys, heart, blood vessels, and brain. High blood pressure can also lead to chronic kidney failure requiring dialysis.

**TEACH** community members that high blood pressure and cholesterol will put them at high risk for heart attack, heart failure, and stroke.

**HELP** community members who have diabetes understand the importance of controlling the disease and regularly taking their diabetes medications.

**INTRODUCE** community members to social workers and others who can help them apply for programs and insurance that can help pay for health care.

## To help promote better lifestyle choices, CHWs can—

**HELP** community members learn how to reduce their daily intake of sodium (salt).

**WORK** with community members to find easier, less expensive ways to increase the intake of fruits, vegetables, and lower sodium and whole grain foods in the community, at schools, and at work.

**HELP** people stay active and fit and maintain a healthy weight.

**HELP** people choose a diet low in saturated fat and trans fat.

**HELP** people learn to bake, broil, or roast food instead of frying.

**ENCOURAGE** those who drink alcohol to consume no more than one drink a day for women and no more than two for men. One drink is 1 oz. of hard liquor, 4 oz. of wine, or 12 oz. of beer.

**ENCOURAGE** people to quit smoking and not use tobacco to reduce risks for diseases and improve health in general.

**LEARN** how to help community members apply for programs and insurance that can help pay for health care and other needs.

## Remember Your ABCS! What Does That Mean?

**A is for aspirin.** Sometimes people who have heart problems or who have had a stroke need to take aspirin to help their heart. CHWs can remind people to take aspirin as advised by their doctor.

**B is for blood pressure control.** CHWs can encourage people to take their blood pressure medicines regularly and have their blood pressure checked to make sure that it is within the normal range. This step also tells people whether their blood pressure medicine is working.

**C is for cholesterol management.** CHWs can teach people why it is important to have their cholesterol checked.

**S is for smoking cessation.** CHWs can teach community members about the harmful effects that smoking has on the person smoking and on others around them. CHWs can also teach people about how smoking puts people at risk for heart attack, heart disease, and stroke. CHWs can teach people about other ways to manage stress and depression.

Visit [millionhearts.hhs.gov](http://millionhearts.hhs.gov) for more information about Million Hearts™.

Remember, CHWs are part of the solution.



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